

REMARKS

Summary of the Amendment

Claims 1-20, 27, 30 and 32-48 were pending in the application. Please cancel Claims 1-20, 27, 30 and 32-48 without prejudice. Please enter new claims 49-66. After entry of this amendment, claims 49-66 are pending in the application.

Summary of the Office Action

Claim 1 was objected to due to an informality. Claims 1-20 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) as being anticipated by Matasunoshita, U.S. Published Patent Application 2003-0179412 (hereinafter, the Matsunoshita reference"). Claims 27, 30, 32-34 and 41-48 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) as being anticipated by Lofgren, U.S. Patent 6,664,976 (hereinafter, "the Lofgren reference"). Claims 35-40 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over the Lofgren reference in view of the Matsunoshita reference.

Because Claims 1-20, 27, 30 and 32-48 were canceled, all of the pending rejections are moot and will not be discussed further herein.

All of the pending claims are believed allowable. As mentioned above, all of the pending claims are new claims. Of these claims, Claims 49, 54, 57 and 63 are independent claims. A description as to why the claims are allowable over the Matsunoshita reference is provided below with reference to independent Claims 49 and 54.

In the embodiments of the invention, additional information can be extracted by an information reading unit. The area-assignment information designates a latent-image area and a background area. This area-assignment information will be shown on copies, so human eyes can recognize this area-assignment information.

On the other hand, the Matsunoshita reference, in paragraph 66 describes "code data". This "code data" includes the following information: (1) copy

inhibition information, (2) condition information, and (3) latent image information. The (3) latent image information designates the latent-image area and the background area. The (2) condition information and the (1) copy inhibition information can be extracted by an apparatus.

The Matsunoshita reference, paragraph 101, describes that the relatively large dots in the background area are faithfully reproduced, but relatively small dots within the latent image area cannot be faithfully copied by the copying machine and that as a result, the image in the latent area is white. Therefore, human eyes can distinguish originals from copies. So, the (3) latent image information can be recognized by human eyes.

The (2) condition information and the (1) copy inhibition information in the Matsunoshita can be extracted by an apparatus and is represented in a form of large dots of the background area such as / or \.

Besides, the (3) latent image information can not be extracted by an apparatus. This (3) latent image information only designates a latent-image area and a background area. The (3) latent image information in the Matsunoshita reference corresponds to the area-assignment information in the claimed invention and is different from the additional information in the claimed invention.

In claim 49, the feature of the present invention is clearly described that "additional information which represents that this is the original" and "wherein the additional information can be extracted according to the arrangement of dots in the latent-image area in the generated pattern image". According to Matsunoshita reference, the information that can be extracted by an apparatus can be added only to the large dots because the (2) condition information and the (1) copy inhibition information is added in a form of large dots of the background area such as / or \.

Besides, if "the additional information which represents that this is the original" and " wherein the additional information can be extracted according to the arrangement of dots in the latent-image area in the generated pattern image" were added to the large dots by employing the technology of Matsunoshita, the information "this is the original" would be extracted for copies as well as originals.

This is because the large dots are an area that also can be reproduced on the copies.

Therefore, Claim 49 is believed allowable over the prior art of record. Accordingly all of the dependent claims depending from Claim 49 (namely, Claims 50-53) are also believed allowable.

In claim 54, "wherein at least either positions of the plurality of positions in the background area and the plurality of positions in the latent-image area are determined based on the additional information" and "wherein the additional information can be extracted based on the difference between the positions of the arranged dots and predetermined positions" are clearly described. According to the Matsunoshita reference, information which can be extracted by an apparatus is added in the form of a dot . That is different from the claimed invention because information which can be extracted by a reading unit is added in the position of a dot.

Therefore, Claim 54 is believed allowable over the prior art of record. Accordingly all of the dependent claims depending from Claim 54 (namely, Claims 55-56) are also believed allowable.

Independent Claim 57 is believed allowable for the same reasons discussed above with reference to Claim 49. Accordingly all of the dependent claims depending from Claim 57 (namely, Claims 58-62) are also believed allowable.

Independent Claim 63 is believed allowable for the same reasons discussed above with reference to Claim 54. Accordingly all of the dependent claims depending from Claim 63 (namely, Claims 64-66) are also believed allowable.

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CONCLUSION

In view of the foregoing, the entire application is believed to be in condition for allowance, and such action is respectfully requested at the Examiner's earliest convenience.

Further, any amendments to the claims which have been made in this response and which have not been specifically noted to overcome a rejection based on prior art, should be considered to have been made for a purpose unrelated to patentability, and no estoppel should be deemed to attach thereto.

If any additional fee is required, please charge Deposit Account Number 502456.

Applicants' undersigned attorney may be reached at (949) 932-3132. All correspondence should be directed to the below-listed address.

Respectfully submitted,

4/7/06

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